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 In Pro Per

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

Sophia Eggleston

Plaintiff

Vs.

Lee Daniels, Danny Strong
 Malcolm Spellman, Rita Grant Miller,
 Twenty-First Century Fox, Inc.

Parent company of
 Fox Entertainment Group, Inc.;

Parent Company of

Twentieth Century Fox Film
 Corporation,

Parent company of

Twentieth Century Fox
 Television, Inc.,
 Twentieth Television, Inc.,
 Twentieth Century Fox Int'L;
 Twentieth Century Fox Int'L
 Television, LCC

Twentieth Century Fox Home
 Entertainment, LLC;
 Fox Network Group, Inc.;

Parent company of

Fox Broadcasting Company;
 Fox Television Stations, Inc.;
 Fox Digital Media;
 Fox International Channels, Inc.
 Does 1 thru 10

Defendants

Case:4:15-cv-11893

Judge: Berg, Terrence G.

MJ: Stafford, Elizabeth A.

Filed: 05-27-2015 At 12:44 PM

CMP EGGLESTON V. LEE DANIELS ET AL
 (DA)

COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT
 INFRINGEMENT;

Judge: _____

Plaintiff Complaint

Copyright Infringement & Related Claims

Plaintiff, Sophia Eggleston brings this suit against Defendants and state the following:

1. Plaintiff, Sophia Eggleston ("Eggleston") is, and at all times material hereto was, an individual residing in the County of Wayne, City of Detroit, and State of Michigan. Plaintiff is the author of a memoir entitled "The Hidden Hand." The subject of the memoir is and was about the early drug lifestyle life of Plaintiff.
2. That Plaintiff Sophia Eggleston allege that her manuscript/book depicts real life events, lifestyle and characters and traits that is and was part of her real life experiences she exhibited, including and not limited to the traits, sexual preferences and behavior of those around her, including family members.
3. Defendant Rita Grant Miller (herein throughout may be referred to as "Miller"), on information and belief, is a resident of Los Angeles County and a screenwriter, and production coordinator and affiliated with various guilds of America, West.
4. Defendant is credited with writing the script Lexie, which was produced as a feature film and served as production

1 coordinator for films such as Ghostbusters, The Naked Gun
2 and Only You.

3 **5.** Defendant Lee Daniels (herein throughout may be referred to
4 as "Daniels") is a producer, director and screenwriter and
5 affiliated with various guilds associated with the
6 television and film industry.

7 **6.** Daniels develops and produces television shows and feature
8 films and is credited with either producing, directing or
9 writing feature films Monster's Ball, Shadow Boxer,
10 Tennessee, Precious, The Paperboy, The Butler and The
11 Woodsman.

12 **7.** On information and belief, Daniels is a resident of New
13 Jersey and has financially gained by the exploitation of
14 Empire by and through his development and directing of
15 numerous episodes of Empire.

16 **8.** Defendant Danny Strong (herein throughout may be referred
17 to as "Strong") is a writer, executive producer, producer
18 and actor with numerous credits of successful film and
19 television projects, including Empire. Defendant Strong
20 develops and produces television shows and feature films
21 including The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, The Butler, and The
22 Rooster.

23 **9.** On information and belief, Strong is a resident of Los
24 Angeles County, State of California and has financially
25 gained by the exploitation of Empire.

1 **10.** Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation (herein
2 throughout may be referred to as "20th Century Fox Film") is
3 one of the six major film studios, and produces and
4 distributes television shows and movies in association with
5 production companies.

6 **11.** 20th Century Fox Films 100% owns and controls the
7 following subsidiary entities:

8 a. Twentieth Century Fox Television, Inc.

9 b. Twentieth Television, Inc.

10 c. Twentieth Century Fox International Television, Inc.

11 d. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment LLC

12 **12.** 20th Century Fox Film is 100% owned and controlled by
13 Defendant Fox Entertainment Group, Inc.

14 **13.** On information and belief, 20th Century Fox Films is a
15 Delaware corporation or a division of a corporation with
16 its principal place of business at 10201 West Pico
17 Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90035

18 **14.** 20th Century Fox Film's registered agent for service of
19 process is the C.T. Corporation System, 818 West Seventh
20 Street, Los Angeles, CA. 90017

21 **15.** 20th Century Fox Film filed the copyright registration
22 for the pilot episode of Empire, as well as the
23 registration for each subsequent episode.

24 **16.** 20th Century Fox Film is a producer and distributor of
25 the television show Empire.

1 **17.** 20th Century Fox Film, and its entities, have
2 financially gained by the exploitation of Empire.

3 **18.** Twentieth Century Fox Television, Inc. (herein
4 throughout may be referred to as "20th Century Fox TV") is a
5 television studio which produces and distributes television
6 shows in association with other production companies.

7 **19.** 20th Century Fox TV is 100% owned and controlled by
8 Defendant Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

9 **20.** On information and belief, 20th Century Fox TV is
10 either a corporation or a division of a corporation with
11 its principal place of business and or registered address
12 at 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA. 90035

13 **21.** 20th Century Fox TV is the television production
14 division of Defendant Twentieth Century Fox Film
15 Corporation.

16 **22.** 20th Century Fox TV is a producer and distributor of
17 Empire domestically and internationally.

18 **23.** 20th Century Fox TV has financially gained by the
19 exploitation of Empire.

20 **24.** Defendant Twentieth Television, Inc. (herein
21 throughout may be referred to as "20th Television") is the
22 syndication and distribution arm of 20th Century Fox TV
23 domestically.
24
25

1 **25.** On information and belief, 20th Television is 100%
2 owned and controlled by Twentieth Century Fox Film
3 Corporation.

4 **26.** On information and belief, 20th Television is a
5 Delaware corporation or division of a corporation with its
6 principal place of business and or registered address at
7 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA. 90035.

8 **27.** 20th Television's registered agent for service of
9 process is the C.T. Corporation System, 818 West Seventh
10 Street, Los Angeles, California. 90017.

11 **28.** On information and belief, 20th Television syndicates
12 and distributes Empire.

13 **29.** 20th Television has financially gained by the
14 exploitation of Empire.

15 **30.** Twentieth Century Fox International Television, Inc.
16 (herein throughout may be referred to as "20th International
17 TV") is, on information and belief, the syndication and
18 distribution arm of 20th Century Fox TV internationally.

19 **31.** 20th International TV is 100% owned and controlled by
20 Defendant Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

21 **32.** On information and belief, 20th International TV is a
22 New York corporation or division of a corporation with its
23 principal place of business and or registered address at
24 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90035.

25

1 **33.** 20th International TV's registered agent for service of
2 process is the C.T. Corporation System, 818 West Seventh
3 Street, Los Angeles, California. 90017.

4 **34.** On information and belief, 20th International TV
5 syndicates and distributes Empire internationally.

6 **35.** 20th International TV has financially gained by the
7 exploitation of Empire.

8 **36.** Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment LLC (herein
9 throughout may be referred to as "20th Century Fox Home") is
10 a company which markets, sells and distributes Fox
11 produced, and or owned, film and television programing.

12 **37.** 20th Century Fox Home is 100% owned and controlled by
13 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

14 **38.** On information and belief, 20th Century Fox Home is a
15 Delaware limited liability corporation or a division of a
16 corporation with its principal place of business and or
17 registered address at West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles,
18 California.

19 **39.** 20th Century Fox Home's registered agent for service of
20 process is the C.T. Corporation System, 818 West Seventh
21 Street, Los Angeles, California 90017.

22 **40.** 20th Century Fox Home is the home video distributor are
23 of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation.

24 **41.** 20th Century Fox Home filed the copyright registered
25 for Empire, season1 and all subsequent seasons.

1 **42.** 20th Century Fox Home markets, sells, and distributes
2 Empire domestically and internationally.

3 **43.** 20th Century Fox Home has financially gained by the
4 exploitation of Empire.

5 **44.** Defendant Fox Networks Group, Inc. (herein throughout
6 may be referred to as "Fox Networks") is a global company
7 which operates and distributes all of the Fox Entertainment
8 Group, Inc. and Twenty-First Century Fox, Inc.

9 **45.** Fox Networks is 100% owned and controlled by
10 defendants Fox Entertainment Group, Inc., and Twenty-First
11 Century Fox, Inc.

12 **46.** Fox Networks 100% owns and controls the following
13 subsidiary entities:

14 a. Fox Broadcasting Company

15 b. Fox Television Stations, Inc.

16 c. Fox Digital Media, Inc.

17 **47.** On information and belief, Fox Networks is a Delaware
18 corporation with its principal place of business and or
19 registered address at 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los
20 Angeles, California 90035

21 **48.** Fox Network's registered agent for service of process
22 is the Corporation Trust, at the Corporation Trust Center,
23 1209 Orange Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.

24 **49.** Empire airs on Fox Networks channels.
25

1 **50.** Fox Networks has financially gained by the
2 exploitation of Empire.

3 **51.** Fox Broadcasting Company (herein throughout may be
4 referred to as "Fox Broadcasting") is a company which
5 operates the Fox television channel that airs programming
6 developed and distributed by the Fox Defendants.

7 **52.** Fox Broadcasting is 100% owned and controlled by
8 Defendants Fox Networks Group, Inc., Fox Entertainment
9 Group, Inc., and Twenty-First Century Fox, Inc.

10 **53.** Fox Broadcasting owns and controls 100% of Defendant
11 Fox Television Stations, Inc.

12 **54.** On information and belief, Fox Broadcasting is a
13 Delaware corporation with its principal place of business
14 and or registered address at 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los
15 Angeles, California 90035.

16 **55.** Fox Broadcasting's registered agent for service of
17 process is the C.T. Corporation System, 818 West Seventh
18 Street, Los Angeles, California 90017

19 **56.** Empire airs on Fox Broadcasting channels.

20 **57.** Fox Broadcasting has financially gained by the
21 exploitation of Empire.

22 **58.** Fox Digital Media (herein throughout may be referred
23 to as "Fox Digital") is a company which handles the digital
24 media operations of the Fox Defendants.
25

1 **59.** On information and belief, Fox Digital is 100% owned
2 and controlled by Defendant Fox Networks Group, Inc.

3 **60.** On information and belief Fox Digital is the successor
4 company to News Corporation Digital Media.

5 **61.** On information and belief, Fox Digital is doing
6 business at 10201 West Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles,
7 California 90035.

8 **62.** Fox Digital operates and controls the Fox Defendants'
9 online programming, including-but not limited to- the
10 reproduction, distribution and performance of Empire.

11 **63.** Fox Digital has financially gained by the exploitation
12 of Empire.

13 **64.** The true names and capacities of those defendants sued
14 herein as DOES 1 through 20, inclusive, are unknown to
15 Pittman, who therefore sues said defendants by such
16 fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this Complaint to
17 allege their true names and capacities when the same have
18 been ascertained.

19 **65.** Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon
20 allege, that at all times material hereto, each of the
21 defendants, including those named herein as DOES, were the
22 agents, representatives, servants and employees of
23 remaining defendants, and that all of the acts herein
24 alleged were done in the course and scope of such agency
25 and employment.

66. This action is brought, and subject matter jurisdiction lies within this Court, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1331 and 1338. This Court has federal question jurisdiction in this matter in that Plaintiff seeks damages and injunction relief against the defendants named herein under Sections 501 through 505 of the Copyright Act of 1976, 17 U.S.C. 101 et seq. The Court has pendant jurisdiction over any claims asserted herein which arise under state law in that such claims flow from a common nucleus of operative fact.

67. Venue lies within this Court pursuant to 20 U.S.C Section 1391(b) (1)-(3), 1391(d) and 1400(a) in that all defendants reside or have business operations for venue purposes and are subject to personal jurisdiction in this District, and that a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in the Michigan judicial district. In particular, on information and belief, each of the individual defendants reside in the United States and/or are citizens of the United States and therefore can be sued in any district including this District.

PREAMBLE

68. On or about February 16 2005 thru January 2, 2008, Plaintiff commence to dedicate a tremendous amount of time,

1 energy and money in the development and adaption of her
2 previous real life experiences into the manuscript which
3 was copyrighted and published as a book named The Hidden
4 Hand for commercial distribution in 2010.

5 **69.** Plaintiff travelled to Los Angeles, California in
6 early 2011 to meet with screenwriter Rita Miller. While
7 residing for a short period with Defendant Miller,
8 Plaintiff provided a copy of the book and further to this
9 Defendant Miller spent a great deal of time taking notes
10 for the purpose of developing a screenplay about Plaintiffs
11 life based upon the book and verbal interactions with
12 Plaintiff.

13 **70.** Several months later, Defendant Miller contacted
14 Plaintiff by telephone and advised her that she was in New
15 Jersey meeting with the film maker Lee Daniels. That she
16 was "pitching" her story to Defendant Lee Daniels and would
17 leave him a copy of Plaintiff's book.

18 **71.** That Defendant Miller apparently became ill while in
19 New Jersey and returned home in Los Angeles. Plaintiff
20 reached Defendant Miller and was told of her illness but
21 that she had left the book with Defendant Daniels.
22 Plaintiff did not hear from Defendant for a considerable
23 period of time after that.

24 **72.** Plaintiff decided not to work with Defendant Miller
25 any longer due to apparent issues. Plaintiff had trouble

1 understanding why Miller and certain other unnamed
2 individuals had put "The Hidden Hand" screenplay concept on
3 the backburner, although Plaintiff had been told by
4 Defendant Miller that various Hollywood producers had
5 expressed an interest in the project.

6 **73.** That in late 2014, Plaintiff commence seeing the
7 advertising regarding the television series know as Empire.

8 **74.** Once the program was aired on all of Defendant Fox
9 Television platforms, Plaintiff became aware that the
10 character know as Cookie Lyon, played by Taraji P. Henson,
11 was similar in behavior, style of dress, behavior and
12 background as Plaintiff.

13 **75.** That on or about January 7, 2015, the Fox Defendants,
14 premiered the television show Empire, starring Terrance
15 Howard, Taraji P. Henson, Jussie Smollett, and Bryshere
16 Gray, allegedly written and created by Defendants Lee
17 Daniels and Danny Strong. The show revolves around a music
18 industry entertainment family. The show was an immediate
19 hit throughout all television markets.

20 **76.** Plaintiff was stunned and dismayed to see the
21 various similarities of events and characters in the first
22 season episodes of the television series Empire, so
23 numerous and specific especially the character "Cookie Lyon
24 "that independent creation was obviously impossible. The
25

1 character Cooke Lyon was remarkable similar to Plaintiff
2 Sophia Eggleston, depicted in The Hidden Hand.

3 **77.** A partial list of similarities between the book The
4 Hidden Hand, written well before Empire and defendants Lee
5 Daniels and Danny Strong's allegedly original work
6 illustrates the folly of maintaining that the two works
7 were independently created;

- 8 • Cookie was a drug kingpin that went to jail. So did
9 Plaintiff Eggleston
- 10 • Cookie is released from jail confinement and
11 immediately places a "hit" on a certain individual.
12 Plaintiff herein, actually was jailed for doing the
13 actual "hit" on a man
- 14 • Cookie is made to have an expensive wardrobe,
15 including wearing mink coats a great deal of the time
- 16 • Cookie has a gay son and Plaintiff has a gay brother.

17 **78.** The foregoing is by no means a comprehensive list of
18 similarities between the book on Plaintiffs life and the
19 show Empire.

20 **79.** Upon considering the strikingly similar character,
21 i.e. Cookie Lyon plot development and character parallels
22 between Empire, allegedly created and written by Defendants
23 Lee Daniels and Danny Strong and The Hidden Hand, created
24 and written by Plaintiff Eggleston years before Empire
25 screenplay, and the ample access Defendant Lee Daniels had

1 to view Plaintiffs' book, given to him by Defendant Miller,
2 it is apparent there is no possibility the similarities are
3 the product of mere coincidence. Defendants had access to
4 and a copy of Plaintiffs' book protected expression in what
5 amounts to theft of Plaintiff's creation.

6 **80.** This is a copyright infringement action filed by
7 Sophia Eggleston to protect her original expression
8 embodied in The Hidden Hand as an original work of art
9 under the legal causes of action of Direct Copyright
10 Infringement, Equitable Relief-Right of Attribution, and
11 other related causes of action.

12 COMMERCIAL SUCCESS OF EMPIRE

13 **81.** Empire was an immediate hit drawing huge ratings with
14 all demographics. Empire parties were established in
15 various cities about the United States.

16 **82.** Defendants Fox and its affiliate companies recently
17 announced the second season would be expanded to 18 shows
18 in lieu of 12.

19 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN EMPIRE AND THE HIDDEN HAND

20 **83.** The character Cookie Lyons, when compared to
21 Plaintiff's life and profile, contains so many striking
22 similarities that the independent genesis of these two
23 characters is impossible.

24 **84.** Defendant Miller, in a recent telephone communication
25 admitted to Plaintiff that the traits, idiosyncratic inter-

1 personal relationship between the personalities present in
2 both The Hidden Hand and Empire are the same. Further to
3 this Defendant Miller admitted to Plaintiff that once the
4 show aired, she wondered if the elements of various scenes,
5 character identities, personalities, relationships caused
6 her to recall giving Plaintiff's book to Lee Daniels
7 several years ago while in New Jersey.

8 **85.** It is important to note that the similarities between
9 certain characters on the show Empire are parallel and
10 closely similar to those depicted in The Hidden Hand.

11 **86.** Any differences between the scripts of Empire and the
12 book The Hidden Hand are so small and insignificant that
13 they cannot be afforded copyright protection, and are in
14 fact, nothing more than transparent attempts to hide
15 Defendants' blatant plagiarism. These differences are more
16 akin to eraser marks on Plaintiffs' book creation and
17 cannot be treated as original expressions, especially as it
18 pertains to the character Cookie Lyons.

19 FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION: DIRECT COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

20 (By Plaintiff against All Defendants)

21 **87.** Plaintiff incorporates by reference the preceding
22 paragraphs and repeat and reallege each of the allegations
23 as if fully set forth here.
24
25

1 **88.** On information and belief, Defendants were aware of or
2 participated in, and contributed to the copyright
3 exploitation of the manuscript The Hidden Hand.

4 **89.** On information and belief, Defendants have earned
5 millions of dollars in revenue from their exploitation of
6 Empire and continues to actively exploit this copyright
7 through advertising sales, television airplay, internet
8 distribution deals, DVD sales, licensing and otherwise.

9 **90.** Defendant screenwriters Lee Daniels and Danny Strong
10 are improperly credited as the writers of the creators of
11 the characters depicted in Empire, especially the character
12 Cookie Lyons. The creation and depiction of the character
13 Cookie Lyons is blatant plagiarism and misappropriation and
14 theft of Plaintiff behavior, lifestyle and depiction.

15 **91.** Defendant Miller solicited The Hidden Hand from
16 Plaintiff and on information and belief provided a copy of
17 Plaintiff's book to Defendant Daniels.

18 **92.** Defendant Daniels access to Plaintiff's copyrighted
19 work is further established because Defendant Miller
20 advised Plaintiff that she had travelled to New Jersey for
21 the express purpose of meeting with Defendant Daniels about
22 producing a film based upon Plaintiff's book. Some of the
23 striking similarities include a unique plot involving the
24 young son, who happens to be gay, visiting his mother in
25 prison. In truth and fact, Plaintiff's gay brother made

1 many visits to her while Plaintiff was incarcerated in
2 prison; Cookie's traumatic scene where she was contracting
3 a "hit" on the individual who she expected of causing her
4 to be incarcerated; the mannerism, including manner to
5 dressing in expensive clothes and minks. These similarities
6 alone, only a few of the many similarities between Empire
7 and the book The Hidden Hand, establish that defendants
8 Daniels and Strong had access to The Hidden Hand.

9 **93.** Defendants and each of them not only had access to The
10 Hidden Hand but slavishly copies original expressive
11 elements of The Hidden Hand in the television show Empire,
12 including its themes, structure, setting, overall story and
13 plot arcs, specific plot devices, interpersonal twists,
14 dialogue, sequenced of events character identities,
15 character personalities, character relationships, character
16 interaction, character development, character
17 idiosyncrasies and even uncommon character names assigned
18 to the same respective roles in each episodes.

19 **94.** Any differences between Empire and The Hidden Hand are
20 dwarfed by the overwhelming similarities between both works
21 and those minimal differences even confirm that Plaintiffs'
22 original expression in the Hidden Hand was crudely copied
23 by Defendants Daniels and Strong.
24
25

1 **95.** Defendant, and each of them, never sought or obtained
2 Plaintiffs' permission to copy, duplicate, perform, exploit
3 or otherwise use Plaintiffs' copyrighted work.

4 **96.** Defendants' copying, duplication, use, performance,
5 and exploitation of The Hidden Hand in Empire constitutes
6 direct infringement of Plaintiffs' copyright in The Hidden
7 Hand.

8 **97.** Defendants' infringing acts were willful, deliberate,
9 and committed with prior notice and knowledge of
10 Plaintiffs' copyright. At a minimum, Defendants acted
11 negligently and recklessly in regards to Plaintiffs'
12 copyright in The Hidden Hand.

13 **98.** In engaging in the acts complained of herein,
14 Defendants, among other things falsely represented that the
15 script depicting various characters in Empire was written
16 and created by Defendants Daniels and Strong, when in fact
17 they acted more like a crude transcription service merely
18 redrafting Plaintiff's depiction of the character Cookie
19 Lyons.

20 **99.** In engaging in the acts complained of herein,
21 Defendants among other things, also failed to properly
22 credit Plaintiff as the author and/or copyright holder.

23 **100.** On information and belief, each and all of the
24 Defendants individually and collectively received millions
25 of dollars, and other valuable benefits and consideration,

1 from their blatant copying of The Hidden Hand and merging
2 it into Empire, and display of said work without
3 Plaintiffs' consent.

4 **101.** Defendants continue to exploit Empire, reaping
5 tremendous financial and other pecuniary benefits.

6 SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION: CONTRIBUTORY COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

7 (By Plaintiff against All Defendants)

8 **102.** Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein by
9 reference all preceding allegations found in the previous
10 paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully set forth here.

11 **103.** Defendants have previously and continue to
12 contributory infringe on Plaintiffs' copyright by
13 intentionally encouraging direct infringement of Plaintiffs
14 'copyrighted work The Hidden Hand, as has been fully set
15 forth in detail throughout this complaint.

16 **104.** Through their conduct alleged herein, said Defendants
17 knowingly and systematically induced, caused, materially
18 contributed to and participated in the infringement of
19 Plaintiffs' copyrighted manuscript The Hidden Hand.

20 **105.** Defendant inducement and encouragement includes but is
21 not limited to Defendant Miller providing a copy of the
22 book to Defendant Daniels.

23 **106.** Said Defendants therefore had knowledge of the
24 infringing activity and nonetheless induced and or
25 materially contributed to the infringing conduct of Daniels

1 and Strong by attempting to look the other way to maximize
2 the profits that each Defendant would be entitled to.

3 **107.** Defendants continue to exploit The Hidden Hand as
4 Empire, reaping tremendous financial rewards and other
5 pecuniary benefits.

6
7 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Sophia Eggleton demand that judgement be
8 entered in her favor against all Defendants for compensatory
9 damages, punitive damages, prejudgment interest and costs of
10 suit and appropriate relief the court deems just and
11 appropriate for tall the Causes of action:

- 12 1. Compensatory damages \$100,000,000 against defendants
13 according to proof at the time of trial;
14 2. Statutory damages;\$100,000,000
15 3. Punitive and Exemplary damages\$100,000,000 to punish
16 Defendants;
17 4. For costs of suit incurred; and
18 5. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just
19 and proper.

20 Dated: May 26, 2015



21 Sophia Eggleton

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23 PLAINTIFF REQUEST A JURY TRIAL
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The Hidden Hand

A Memoir

Sophia Eggleston

The Hidden Hand, Publisher
Southfield, Michigan

The Hidden Hand: a Memoir by Sophia Eggleston

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Disclaimer: This is a memoir. While real names, places and events appear in this book, the account is told from the author's perspective and personal recollections.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to:

God, for being my Shield, the Shepherd of my heart and the Protector of my soul;

My mother, Sophie Etta McAfee, for being the best mother in the world, always there for me whether I'm right or wrong, and never giving up on me. A mother's love is so much like God's love—it never gives up on us;

My sisters' dead memories;

My stepfather, Harry McAfee, for letting me know that the right way was possible;

My sister-in-law, Resa, for being the big sister that I needed and God sent to dream with me and bring it to pass.

THE CROSS

I gain faith by reading God's word praying and fasting and by my own experience of God's power in my life.

The constant persistent recognition of God's spirit in all I did and do in my personal relationships. The ever-accumulating weight of evidence in support of God's guidance, the numberless instances in which seeming chance or wonderful coincidence can be traced to God's purpose in my life.

All these things gradually engender a feeling of wonder, humility and gratitude to God.

I often thought how w hen I thought a little further to the point where I was born from God's longing. I believe sometimes in some places in my life, I needed to go back that far because that is where the deepest dignity of my person lies. From that love I've come forth unstoppable, nothing can shake it or alter it for all eternity. I believe God's longing for us all is eternally present in God's love. I live today again more on his love, than on air, food and drink.

Funny thing though is the truth of the whole matter is no matter how I got side tracked or hurt that is where my real roots lies and I found by it's great grace on my life, that is my deepest source.

When and if I fell short his loved remained in it's entirety to me.

The precious gift as anyone can see by now that knows me is the cross in my life, I pray! I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Many times in my life the cross triggered rejection, depression, death of both sisters and prison, and if I 'd of kept seeing it as frustration and unfairness. I 'd of never got back on track.

I think back even now sometimes how some of the things I went through seized my whole being for a while. I went through the fire and I am not burn thank you Jesus! I carried heavy burdens and God didn't let them log me down long. What I feared most happen several time, two different ways and I survived by God's love. God is with me and it's awesome how I can see now how he has help me and not let me go, so I could bear the uncertainties, accept the pain.

Sometimes still I find myself filled of impatient. Now through the cross road of my life, I can wait confidently and surrender myself and all that is mine to God because he faught for me.

Faith comes from God and it's divine and unattainable on our own.

Faith is given to us by God alone the vessel is sinful, but the word is pure and holy.

One day I heard the Lord say to me Sophia the word goes forth to accomplish that which God pleases. It's not vulnerable to the effect of the vessel through which it comes. The vessel may be filled with weaknesses and inconsistencies, but the word is steadfast in heaven.

I learnt through all the hurt, pain and rejection that God's word is not a product of time, but of eternity. I got a hold of God's promises and I knew in my heart that they were alive with power as I confessed them out of my mouth.

I dare anybody in here right now to speak to their mountain of need and confess God's promises out and his word says you will see the miracle you need come to past. He's no respect or of person. What he's done for me he'll do for you it aint over till Jesus say it over.

It was that moment my unbelief collapsed that Christ begin to shine through me and in me. Christ is the mystery of the cross.

The moment in which my unbelief collapsed. I say it again because usually one hears the moment in which my faith collapsed, but I say my unbelief collapsed as if it was the wall that hid the mystery of the cross. I was blessed by the cross when I lifted up the son of God and realized that he was and is I am that I am!

The cross has taught me to to accept my fellow men and women as they are in Christ.

The death of Jesus on the cross has taught me that the most difficult art is forgiveness. His crucifixion is the most learned book any person can read. From this book he drew his wisdom and his love and his astounding fruitfulness.

My cross back is where I've begun to draw my real wisdom and love and astounding fruitfulness. Just like the death of Jesus on the cross didn't come out of the blue.

It's clear to me now the Hidden Hand had to come to me this way because the battles not mine but his!

Sophia Eggleston Testimony:

At the county Jail, for eight months, I peeped through a spot in the window at the Sun, the Moon, the Stars. It was my first encounter with solitary confinement, and each day I drifted further away from my sense of humanity. I laid on my bunk, lost in loneliness and despair.

Occasionally I thought about asking for help, but I had too much pride. Besides, there was no one to ask, no one cares, anyway, I told myself. I did call on God, even though my thoughts were traveling many different courses. My mind and heart, was telling me God could help me now. But the devil was saying there's no God. If he was real, he would never allowed this to happen.

For months I wavered between wanting to die and wanting to live. At some point during those endless days, I finally made up my mind to live. I realized, I was in Jail because I had committed a crime.

My heart was broken. Time after time that happened in my life. I always seemed to make a mess of things.

Nevertheless, the goals that I set upon entering this night mare became a reality. Many times I laid in my bunk and cried, because I could do nothing to help the dying. I've been kicked down many times in my life, but my competitive spirit always brings me to the top again.

Although I am physically strong enough to survive, I don't

want that kind of existence I'd known all my life. I sat facing Life, without hope in nothing but Jesus Christ, unable to live and unable to die.

For the first time in my life I began to have a personal relationship in prayer with God. Many times I told God, if He was real, take my life or free me.

I can't stand this place anymore. Weeks later I had more patients more hope, but at that time it never occurred to me to give God the credit. But I never forgot all my prayers of desperation to God.

I laid on my bunk, a many night, reflecting on the events that lead me to such a place. Clearly, it all began with Jesus not being the head of my life, running with the wrong crowd. As the old saying goes: one who crawls with animals catches fleas, so it was my life.

Through the long nights of relived memories, I come to understand, how pride had wrecked my life, even as it had destroyed Adam and Eve and multitudes since. Many nights I would be praying and the dam that held years of hatred and bitterness within me would burst into a flood of tears. For hours I would cry and read the scriptures, until I could no longer stand the strain. I would fall on my knees morning noon, and night, crying out to Jesus, admitting my sin and begging His forgiveness. God heard the cry of my heart and cleansed my sin, filling me with Joy and Peace such as I've never known.

The words of Psalm 102: verses 19-21 became a reality: For

He looked down from the heights of His Sanctuary: From Heaven the Lord viewed the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to loose those appointed to death, to declare the name of the Lord in Ziön, and His praise in Jerusalem.

On May 23, 1992, Me a lowly sinner met the mighty Savior! The commitment I made that night was a body, soul, mind, and heart commitment to my Lord God. Inmates called me a phony while guards labeled me a Jesus Freak. I longed for some good-matured companionship.

Growing in Christ was a slow process, and many times I wonder if I'd ever be as mature in Christ as the outsiders were that came in. Sometimes I reverted to bad habits. But as I studied God's word. I learned to depend on the power of Christ in my life to overcome temptation.

It's not easy living a Christian life behind prison gates. But when I feel confused, I get down on my knees and pray. It's become a daily habit seeking power on my knees talking to God. I empty my heart to the Father, some peep in my room and see me praying and soon I find myself ministering and praying with them.

Getting into God's word was the key to growing in the Lord. Sometimes I just think about the Apostle Paul and how blessed I am even though I am in Prison. Paul was in a dungeon with his ankles in stocks. He couldn't walk around as I can. I have so much more for which to be thankful for. We have each other and people to love us and visit us. I don't have anything materially, but I have the greatest possession on the face of the

earth Jesus Christ! And one day I'm going to joint heirs with Him. Galatians 4:7 reads: Therefore you are no longer a servant but son, and if a son, then on heir of God through Christ. We are blessed like the Apostle Paul we must pray and praise God with our voices while tears wash our faces as the depression give away to joy.

Many times uncertainty's about the future, left me with a feeling of confusion, and I searched the Scriptures for Peace. One day My eyes fell on Psalms 118:17-18. Those were the words from the Lord I'd been waiting for: I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death. I claimed those verses, and God used them in a tremendous way. They renewed my hope and determination to fight for my life.

Praise God!

I'm Just A Little Jesus Girl!

Sophia Eggleston

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all and foremost, I liked to give God Almighty praise and thanks for the call on my life. Without His Hidden Hand in my life being there, all through out my life, it wouldn't be no me, to walk by faith and receive the promise of God in my life being fulfilled. For all the unseen and seen dangers that He kept me from, I thank Him with a gratitude that only He could understand. I love you and thank you God for the intimacy, that You desired to bestow upon me. Thankyou God for The Hidden Hand becomeing a realty!

Second, I like to give thanks to my dear sweet mother, that no matter what I did and didn't do, always reminded me of the God she knew, could bring me through unharmed if I'd just turn to Him in that hour. For all the sleepless nights I've caused you, being so bad, I'm sorry. Without God and you, I know I couldn't made it. When God decided to bring me through you, He gave me His best and I'm thankful to Him for having you as my mother. You've been the best mother and friend that a girl could have, I love You!

Third, I give thanks to my 2 sisters, Valjean and Keta that went on to Glory before me, for being strong enough to die and letting me be strong enough to live to see our childhood dreams come through. I love yah and I'm thankful to God for the few short lived days that we shared growing up that gave me the determination to not give up and make The Hidden Hand a realty.

Fourth, I give thanks to my four brothers, GeGe, Reggie, Robin, Tico, who all had to seat and listen to me for years, telling them that God was making a book and movie out of my life story and to keep me from getting upset, they always said they could see it to, but they would all say, that they would be glad when the bbok or movie got finished, cause they were tired of baby sitting me for Him. I love yah!

Fifth, I give thanks to God for my two wonderful daughters, Yakia, Delronna and my niece Rahketa. God knew what He was doing when He gave me all three of them, because every time I looked at them, I fought to survive that much more, because I never wanted them to look down in a casket on me and feel the pain that I felt when I buried my two sister's. My love for them to not see them hurt, gave me the faith that I needed to sustain me on this journey. I love yah!

Six, I give God thanks for Eddie Hodge(my oldest daughter father) who God sent into my life, for the purpose of me meeting the stars and making The Hidden Hand, Hollywood material, when I didn't even know it. It was the relationship with him that made me latter who I was to be to survive in the cold city of Detroit. I'll never forget, that last phone call from you, before you went on home to glory, after God had showed you, that my life story was movie material. Eddie's words to me, I'll never forget was "I was laying here thinking this morning and I said, if Spike Lee could get a hold to her life story" I'm thankful to God, that He even showed Eddie, where it all was headed before he took him on to Glory. I love you Eddie!

Seventh, Judge William Hathaway, my God father from heaven. I thank God for you and all your wisdom and love and advise. You were the person, that always reminded me that it didn't matter unless it was in black and white. You always encouraged me, to hold on to all my information and promised me that it all would one day pay off, even if they were ignoring me then. I love you!

Eighth, Father Hathaway, the man of God that God sent in my life to encourage me and help me not to loose the faith, right before the blessing. When you told me that it was going to be alright and to let you pray for me, no-matter what, I knew no devil in hell could prevail. Thankyou and I love you!

nine, I thank God for the late Miss Bertha Harris, who stood true to the call on her life and made me her last assigement from God, to reassure me that it was God that I was hearing and all I had to do was continue to pray and listen for His voice and no matter what was going on around me, I would prevail! Thank you and I love you.

The Hidden Hand

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The Hidden Hand

Here I sit, in a prison jail cell at Scott's Correctional Facility this quiet and peaceful Wednesday evening, June 1, 2005. My head throbbing and pounding with all this powerful, soul-wrenching information, this utterly terrible yet gloriously wonderful story that must be told, and not by any means be covered up. For it is a story of exploitation and gross intimidation. A story of brutal murder, death and destruction, of cover-up and corruption in high places on all levels of law enforcement, the judicial system, and politics. It is also about love, and life, a story about deliverance, freedom, and restoration of healing and hope.

Growing up fighting and being a gang leader in the Projects, going to Ziggy's Johnsons dance school and dancing, performing in a show once a year with the Spinners. Running away from home at fifteen a virgin and becoming a drug kingpin. My oldest sister being found shot to death three times in her chest and once in the head, with her boyfriend and an \$80,000 dollars was found in the house with their bodies, after some corrupted cops robbed them and killed them for a million in cash, only leaving the \$10,000 to make it look drug related for the media.

Meeting Edward Hodge (known as Eddie or Tape shack) He sang with R&B singer George Clinton on the Album "Bow Woo Woo", and also done concerts with greats like: B.B. King, Johnny Taylor, Tyrone Davis, Carl Carlton, the O'Jays and Dramatics. I met, and socialized and got high with all these celebrities through him. It was a thrilling experience, which yielded blessed memories personally. Eddie and I developed a deep relationship, and it was from this relationship in 1982 that my first precious daughter, Yakia was born. Eddie was my right hand in the drug business. We "threw-down" with a vengeance, also with alot of hype, danger and destruction using and selling drugs. On the destructive part, Eddie and I find my second sister known as Keta and his cousin Reno tied up and strangled to death. The murder was indirectly by the

Detroit narcotic squad, and 30,000 in drugs and money were taken and my niece was 5 pounds and 4 ounces left alive alone for 23 hours on oxygen.

I commit a murder in broad day light and don't remember it for eighteen months and was taken to trial in 9 months given a one to fifteen, after meeting the Almighty Savior Jesus Christ. The murder comes back to me in prison and I'm rushed out to the Forensic Mental hospital and brought back stable.

In 1995 of Dec, I'm released from prison and in June of 1996, God through me start a radio Ministry, that goes on to T.v and I'm Ordained, by the Late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Secretary, Dr. Annie Gary Johnson to be an ordained minister to the Gospel of Peace.

Often I would leave the radio and Television stations, feeling very burden for the prisoners and for the police corruption that had and was taken place in our city. For it was through, the ministry that the "Famed" "Don" Felix Wells heard about me and contacted me for help. Felix had been convicted of million-dollar money laundering and drug dealing. He was sentenced to 30 years in Federal prison by Federal Judge Cohn (the third richest federal Judge in the Country). After me and Felix begin to get closer, he reveal to me with facts, that he was in on a 2 million dollar investment with Judge Cohn son, Sheldon Cohn and two other partners of his, which one was his nephew and the other was Theodis Shipp, who was married to a State Judge, judge Wendy Baxter. So after all 4 men put up \$500,000 a piece, the great intrigue begin to happen. Ganster Rock (Felix nephew) is found murder in a trunk and Theodis Shipp is put under a 24 hour federal surveillance ^{and} a kilt, by fed's and Felix is taken to trial in front of the Judge that's the father of the only other living partner to the two million dollars investment and given 30 years. Bernard Sherrott who was Felix money launderer and who Judge Cohn gave the \$500,000 dollars to for his son part of the investment is given \$150,000 cash fee from the two and a half million dollars they take off Felix jet and

it was all covered up, so Sheldon Cohn and Bernard Sherrott(who sold the state fair grounds back to the state of Michigan for 16.5 million dollars) get's away with 2 million totally free and easy and the murder of two men and one locked up by Judge Cohn, knowing that his son was in on a two million dollar investment with 3 Gansters. I did alot of investigating and wrote and told United States Attourney Janet Reno, even told her about the fact that Edward Robinson, who was running the criminal division right up under her was invovled and I was totally ignored and Felix was taken back to an appeal trial after winning his appeal, because Judge Cohn told his lawyer don'ty mention Bernard Sherrott name again in the court room and he was set up and put in front of the worst federal Judge in the Country, who has the most revisible cases in the country and given life. I set out to write my life story in Dec of 2004 and I'm threathened by the F.B.I, that if I print that letter I wrote to Janet Reno in 2001 about Judge Cohn and Felix Walls I'd be kilt.

So through all the horrific hell of my life, the terrible crime and violence, the executions and deaths of both my sisters and family members, the continous fear and threat of death being a drug kingpin and gang Lord, being in prison in 1992 for killing my boyfriend and all the horrors of life in the "pen" I find myself back inside of the prison walls to only hear the Holy Spirit say to me: "Sophia, this is not the end. Do not be afraid. You do not understand it yet, but I have brought you here for such a time as this. I have had my eye on you, and by my almighty power have been behind the scenes guiding, overriding, supervising your life's events, extending the time for this awesome ministry to evolve to grow, and to develop with great power and acclaim. This all is just a warning shot before the gun battle of spiritual warfare, the present 'crisis' will pass and you will see and witness an emerging ministry that will be utterly mind boggling."

I was to learn five years after Bertha Harris death in June 2005, here in

Scott's Women Prison, that God does not make mistakes. It was I, who had made the grave mistake of not knowing the power of God.

As I sit here in prison writing my life story for God, under his protection from Feb 16, 2005 till Jan 2, 2008, I can see why He allowed me to prepare my plate before the enemy and I understand why He had to do it this way. Now no matter what, the book is finished and facts will be made public knowledge and in 10 short days, it will be Jan 2, 2008 and I will walk out of these prison gates with the promise of God to me finished and alived with goodness and mercy following me all the days of my life.

I no longer needs men with guns to protect me, I'm somber and prayed up and has hide God's word in my heart and He has wrote it in my mind and today I have goodness and mercy as my body guards and I shall live and not die and enjoy the fruit of my womb and walk in God's perfect Will for my life. One thing for sure, I can say and that is, that God did personally Pimp the devil and prevailed in my life, where there seemed as time there was no hope. If nothing else God had taught me to wait on Him, even while I'm going through and I'm thankful for Him allowing me to get locked up these last almost three years and getting me back on track and in poistion to see the promise of God come to fullfillment in my life. I'm not scared of the fed's or the police, but I understand that as I'm obedient to God's form of goverment, He will bring them all down and expose them in His timing. It took me years to understand, it doesn't matter, what I want, but that I'm to continual to just trust in His Omnipotent's, cause God know's about it all!

Born fast to fight

I was born June 20, 1962. The fifth of eight children birthed to Warren H. Eggleston Sr, a carpenter by trade, a very violent and abusive man who loved gambling and drugs more than his family, And Sophie Etta Eggleston, former Homecoming Queen and basketball star of Carver High in Martinsville, Virginia. It was June 19, 1962 and my mother often told me how she was tired of being pregnant and carrying me, in that heat and hot Sun, here in Detroit Michigan. She said she took two table spoons of castor oil and a hot bath that night and as she begin to step one feet out of the tub, the labor pains begin to hit her that would soon bring me into this World fast. She was rushed to Burden Mercy hospital and I was born about 1:00 a.m. June 20, 1962. She said when she first saw me, I had five different colors of hair on my head and she wondered, what the hell was wrong with her baby's hair?

The first memory I have as a child and being alive is being afraid at four years old, when I tried to ride my bike down the stairs and my mother tried to catch me, but couldn't and I landed at the bottom of the stairs with my head busted wide open and blood everywhere. I remember being at the hospital and scared to death of all these people in white, screaming and crying as they held me down, to sew up my head. The next memory I have is of me walking to school by myself at five years old thinking about the lady across the street, who everyone was saying had gotten kilt last night, while sitting in her living room on her couch and a bullet came through her window and kilt her. Death was just that sudden, it was horrible in my mind that someone would do a thing like that. Life was unfair to be alive one minute and dead the next. I thought to myself, she couldn't have known she was about to die just sitting on her couch, what will her kids do now? I was too little to think about all this, it was confusing me and where was this God, that everyone talked about?

2

It wasn't long after this that everybody was talking about this great man, name Dr. Martin Luther King Jr being murdered. It was all on the news, the radio and everybody on the block in the schools, everybody ~~seemed~~ ^{body} seemed to be upset about this great man getting kilt. I was even more confused because in my mind, if there was a God that everyone talked about, why would he let bad things like this continue to happen and especially with a great man such as everyone was saying this man was. I had to try and make myself stop thinking about all this, it was too scary to me and I couldn't figure it out. Most of the time as a kid I always seemed to figure out things and what to do, all but death. Thinking things out came easy, once I pounded it for a while alone, but not death and dying and being kilt.

I was in the first grade and on my way home from school and these two friends of mine, that lived on my block and their big sister begin walking behind me and saying mean things to me about me. I really didn't understand what was going on, we were suppose to have been friends. They started saying I thought I was cute and some boy liked me, better than them. I didn't know what they were talking about, so I tried to ignore them, but they started pulling my hair and stepping on my heels and calling me names. My little mind started going a hundred miles a hour. I knew I was out numbered and on top of it they had their big sister with them, but I begin to think about my mother and what she always would tell us. I could hear my mother saying "You come here crying talking about somebody done, done something to you and you let them, I'm gonna beat your ass and then send you back out there to beat theirs". The thought of me getting my butt beat twice and by my mother, I couldn't tolerate no more, so I turned around and begin to fight them both like crazy at the same time, they stopped and backed up and didn't want to fight me no more and the big sister started cussing them out.

3

But neither one of them would listen to her and step to me again, so I started walking the rest of the way home, hair all messed up and crying mad as hell, but I had learnt one of the biggest lessons of my life, not realizing that it would be this one lesson that would sustain me and make me a winner for the rest of my life to reflect upon. "Nobody really wants to fight someone, that really will fight them and they got to take a chance on losing". From that point on I didn't care if I was scared or you was bigger than me or older, if you hit me or did something to me I didn't like you better be ready to fight!

Up until I was eight years old, we lived on the East side of Detroit and my mother and father was still married and together, with me and my two sisters, Valjean and Keta and my four brothers, GeGe, Reggie, Robin and Tico. My mother finally decided to leave my father after suffering continued physical and verbal abuse by him, when during one of their fight's and I'm eight years old, I jump into it after taking the broom out of my sisters hands and start beating my daddy with it as he pound my mother, calling him motherfuckers telling him to get off my mother. He was shocked at me and stopped. I was my fathers favorite child and I knew it and I wasn't scared of him like the rest of my sister's and brothers and he knew it. My mother went behind my father's back after this and got help from the welfare Department to plan our final escape from my father with all of us with her to take care by herself. I heard my mother say often she knew it was time to go after I had jumped into their fight. My mother use to have to send me into their bedroom in the morning before we went to school, to get my fathers pants off the floor or wherever he ^{threw} through them when he took them off and bring them out the room to her, so she could get some money out his pockets, so we could have food and the things we needed and I would take them back, because he would barely buy us anything and had money.

My mother had grown tired of the beatings and black eyes and leaving him and coming back after he promised her he wouldn't do it again and he'd treat us better. I remember as we plan our great escape from my father for the last time. All of us would be looking out the front window to see if my father was going to pull up, so we could run and let my mother know he was coming cause my mother was packing our stuff in boxes and sending it next door to her friend Pokey house, while he was gone. If we seen my father pulling up, we run and tell my mother and she stop packing and put up all evident of what we was doing and we all act normal until he leave again. We all was glad to do it, knowing this would get us away from my father and him fighting our mother for good. After we got everything packed and over Pokey's house and my daddy was gone, my mother took us next door and called a cab and took us to the Viking Motel on Grand River and we would walk three times a day for meals and eat with the vouchers the welfare Department had given my mother to feed us. Then about two weeks later a white man appeared and took us all to the Herman Gardens Projects to see this tall white three story pen house in a big building, that would be our new home.

My daddy showed up a few months later, turning the corner and we all saw him and before he could turn around and park, we ran in the house and begin to lock the doors and windows and tell our mother, he was out there. My father begin to bang on the door pleading with my mother to just talk to him through the window. We all listened hoping our mother wouldn't go for his lies this time and let him back into our World, always hurting her. I heard my daddy telling my mother some voodoo lady he went to told him where we were. We knew my mother didn't believe in that mess, cause she made us go to Sunday school and Church every Sunday. Finally after some hours, my mother made the fatal mistake to let him in and we couldn't get rid of him and he started his same old stuff and jumped on my mother a few weeks later.

We came home from school and my mother had a black eye, but this time she said that she had called the police when he left and they came and told her not to let him back in and if he came bothering her call them. This time was a little different tone in my mother voice as we would hear her on the phone talking to her sister and friends we could tell she meant business. She had gotten the manager to come and change our locks and she just kept saying she rather be dead in hell than put up with him any longer, cause she knew he wasn't going to ever change and she had put up with his shit for 14 years on the account of us, wanting us to have a father but no more. My mother said the place was in her name and she didn't have to worry about us being put out and the welfare gave her food ^{shut} to feed us and she had a job at the Nursing home and she'd rather worked to take care of us then to keep subjecting herself and us to my daddy mess. My mother even brought herself a gun, cause I'm sure she could feel something, but she or we didn't know what my daddy was going to try next, but we knew it wasn't over, but we also knew our mother had brought a gun and that meant he wasn't coming back in our house and ever do anything else and get away. About a week went by and we hadn't heard nothing from our father and one day my mother didn't come home from work or call or anything to tell us she was held up and coming later. Night came and still no word from our mother. We all became a little worried, I kept getting thoughts in my mind that my mother might be laying somewhere dead, cause that wasn't like our mother, her whole life was centered around us. I couldn't bear the thought of my mother being dead and never not coming home, so I begin to force myself to think she was coming back no matter what was going on with her it would be over soon. When we was woke up by our big brother GeGe that next morning telling us to get ready and go to school and him telling my oldest sister Valjean to get my two little brothers ready for school, Robin and Tico, I was hoping my mother had called and told him to do it, but he said

when I asked did moma call? no, but we was still taking our asses to school. My mother had taught me and my sisters how to clean our house and take care of ourselves well, cause she worked. She also had always threatened us and whip our butts, about fighting each other and we knew if someone was fighting or messing with one of us, we better jump in and help rather we was winning or losing, cause when we got back home and my mother found out that we didn't team up on the other person and help each other we got our butts beat, so we grew up, fighting each other, but somebody else better not do nothing to one of us and one of us was around, cause we was trained to automatically jump in each others fight and double team you. It was like and unspoken code with us to take care each other. After we got out of school that day and came home our mother was there. We could hear her on the phone telling someone that my father had come to her job the day before and put a gun to her head when she got off work and forced her in the car and took her to some Lake and told her if she didn't take him back he was going to kill her. She say she told him in his face she rather be dead and in hell then ever take him back, then she said he looked at her and told her, he knew she was a crazy bitch and at that moment my mother say he knew she was no longer scared of him and he took her back to the Nursing Home to her car, after threatening her all night and seen she meant business. She often told how he told her wasn't no other man going to want her with seven kids and she'd be back and how she told him, don't worry about that and somebody wanting her, cause she could take care her seven kids herself, if she didn't ever get another man. My mother was about 120 pounds and still had a shape and no belly and no stretch marks and real pretty even after having 7 kids and she turned the head of mens everywhere we went with her and payed them all no attention. Me and my sisters was real pretty too and all the girls swore our brothers was the finest things they seen.

My mother carried her gun for a while and when my father would call she would let him know she had made a police report against him and she had a gun waiting on him and she wasn't putting up with none of his mess in no fashion shape or form and eventually my daddy got the message and left us alone. He never really did nothing for us or spend no time with us doing anything, so we didn't miss him anyway. Life was better without him, we had more things with my mother working and the help of the Welfare Department then we ever did, cause my mother was a devoted mother to her kids, even thou she kicked our asses every time we done something we wasn't suppose to be doing or something she told us not to do.. We all had a mind of are own and even thou we knew right from wrong and knew when our mother found out we did something she was going to beat our asses, if we wanted to do it we did it and accepted if it got back to our mother we were hit, which most of the time, things always seemed to get back to our mother for some reson. I think partly people always told on us, especially me was because we didn't give a fuck about what nobody else said or done. My mother begin to say she finally had aPeace of mind and even thou she had to take care of us all by herself, she would say she wouldn't trade it for the world, cause she say if we did something she could whip our asses and get back in her bed and go to sleep knowing we wasn't going to be put out and we had food to eat and cloths to wear, she was fine..

I started my first gang at eight years old and found myself fighting all the time, even thou I was smart in school. I fought the teachers and anybody who got in my way when I was fighting, I stopped at nothing, if you did something to me or I didn't like you was going to pay, I didn't care how big you was or how old you were. I had a temper so bad once I got started fighting, I didn't care if I was bleeding or anything, the only way they could stop me from fighting was that the teachers and adults would have to all hold me down for a while till I cooled down. My temper was out of control, if I got my

hands on something and you was in my way of getting to the person I was fighting, you was going to get hit too. I stayed kicked out of school and on punishment and beat by my mother but it didn't stop me. My mother would swear everytime she beat me, she was going to beat that shit out of me, she'd even come up to the school and beat me in front of everybody hoping that would make me shame in front of my friends and I'd stop, but it only made me more determined to do whatever I wanted to do regardless of the consequences. One day while I was eight years old and in the third grade, somebody came and told me that my sister Valjean was up in her homeroom crying cause this boy name Chris Henry in her 6th grade homeroom had spacked her. I got mad as hell cause I knew this guy was a bully and big and I was going to have to really figure out a way to get him for that, plus their homeroom was all the way up-stairs. I got to thinking and told my gang members in the hall way doing class change, I wanted them all to go up to my sister homeroom class with me and we was going to go in their class room and beat his ass all together in-front of everybody in the class and the teacher and teach his ass about putting his hands on my sister. My gang did what ever I told them to do, we didn't care if it meant we all was going to get kicked out of school, we stuck together and did what I said because I was the leader. We all ran up-stairs and pushed passed the teacher and ran in that room and beat the hell out of Chris Henry in front of his whole class, before all the teachers could get enough help to get us off him. That was the talk of the school and of course all of us that they caught and held on to got kicked out of school. This time I was hoping my mother wouldn't be mad at me, since this boy had spacked Valjean and made her cry and I was only taking up for my sister against a bully, but she whipped me anyway and put me on punishment saying I had a lot of nerve to go upstairs to my sisters homeroom and jump on a 6th grader and who the hell did I think I was. I had only done what my mother had taught us to do and that was take up for each other.